

Office of Congressman Charles W. Dent  
*Proudly Representing Pennsylvania's 15<sup>th</sup> District*



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## Congressman Dent calls on Secretary of Defense to keep PA Army National Guard at full strength

U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15) joined his Pennsylvania colleagues in the U.S. House and Senate in bipartisan opposition to the Defense Department's proposed changes that would affect the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. Congressman Dent signed a letter opposing the changes to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey (see copy of letter).

The Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report, released on February 6, 2006, suggested a plan to reduce the number of combat brigades in the Army National Guard from 34 to 28. Pennsylvania could lose five heavy battalion-size units, which regularly work as a combat force.

"I think it would be short-sighted to make these reductions in our National Guard forces," Congressman Dent said. "The Pennsylvania National Guard provides essential duties here at home in times of emergency, and these brigades are central to the ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq."

Since September 11, 2001, the Pennsylvania Army National Guard has deployed more 10,600 overseas. Currently, Pennsylvania's 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team (BCT) is serving a one-year deployment in Iraq. More than 3,300 of the 3,700 members of the 55<sup>th</sup> BCT have been deployed in the Global War on Terror, and the 56<sup>th</sup> Stryker BCT deployed more than 2,500

soldiers to the Gulf coast on short notice in response to Hurricane Katrina. In addition, Guard units perform peacekeeping missions on a recurring basis in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Eighteen of Pennsylvania's 19 Members of Congress signed the letter (the only exception was U.S. Rep. Jack Murtha, who is ranking member of the House Defense Appropriations Committee), as did U.S. Senators Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum.

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